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ABSTRACT

In the first phase of this study (see ED 040 133), data revealed that lunchroom aides constituted the largest category of paraprofessionals in both paid and voluntary respects. Inasmuch as the lunchroom aide was found to be the most common paraprofessional, the decision was made to study this type of paraprofessional in depth. Questionnaires were sent to principals, all lunchroom aides, and 25 percent of the teachers in 150 randomly selected schools qualified for inclusion in the study based on the use of three or more lunchroom aides working in the building. The response rate constituted 89.3 percent of the total requested. Survey results are provided in tables and texts under the headings (1) profile of lunchroom aides, (2) working environment of the lunchroom aide, (3) participants' perceptions of lunchroom aides job, (4) lunchroom aide employment procedures and policies, and (5) lunchroom aides' perceived and preferred roles. (Author/MLF)

Research Coordinating Unit

ED 072549

THE STATUS AND ROLE OF LUNCHROOM AIDES IN SELECTED NEW YORK STATE SCHOOL DISTRICTS

PHASE TWO OF A CONTINUING STUDY
SCHOOL PARAPROFESSIONALS:
ROLES AND JOB SATISFACTIONS

EA 001 885

The University of the State of New York
THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
Bureau of Occupational Education Research
Albany, New York 12224

ED 072549

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Phase Two of a Continuing Study
School Paraprofessionals: Roles and Job Satisfactions

With the Aid of a Grant from the Bureau of Occupational Education Research, The New York State Department of Education, Albany, New York

Department of Education
College of Agriculture
Cornell University, Ithaca, New York

February, 1970

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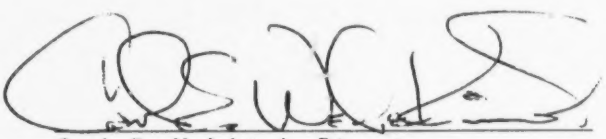
FOREWORD

Increasing Federal attention is being directed toward school lunch programs. When the Senate recently passed an expanded school lunch bill, it provided free lunches for nine million children. Many more children will benefit from "reduced-price" meals.

The government is also in the process of developing school breakfast programs. As lunch programs are expanded and breakfast programs are begun, there will be an increasing demand in the schools for food service personnel. School lunchroom aides, the largest category of paraprofessionals presently being used in New York State school districts, should continue to receive major consideration as a source for satisfying this demand.

This report was coordinated for publication by Theresa M. Mack, Associate, and Whitney G. Wilkes, Aide in the Bureau of Occupational Education Research. Additional single copies may be obtained by writing: Bureau of Occupational Education Research, New York State Education Department, Albany, N.Y. 12224.



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Forty-five New York State school districts participated in this phase of the continuing study of school paraprofessionals. Grateful appreciation is extended to the chief school administrators, building principals, teachers, and lunchroom aides who responded so well to extensive questionnaires. Returns were received from 89.3 percent of the individuals contacted.

Funding for this study was provided by the Bureau of Occupational Education Research, the New York State Education Department. The assistance of the Bureau is very much appreciated.

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The Status and Role of Lunchroom Aides in Selected New York State School Districts

Introduction

The first phase in a continuing study of the role and job satisfactions of school paraprofessionals revealed a surprising number of New York State schools actively participating in this approach. Of the 94 percent of responding school districts larger than common schools and exclusive of New York City, use of paraprofessionals was reported by 94.7 percent. The total number of paid paraprofessionals (10,054) was about twice the number of voluntary paraprofessionals (4,854).

Lunchroom aides constituted the largest category of paraprofessionals in both paid and voluntary respects. In 407 school districts of the State there was a total of 3,106 paid lunchroom aides; in 18 school districts voluntary lunchroom aides totaled 738.

Nature of Phase Two

Inasmuch as the lunchroom aide was found to be the most common paraprofessional, decision was made to study this type of paraprofessional in depth. Random selection was made of 20 suburban central school districts, 20 rural central school districts, and 5 enlarged city school districts on the basis of admitted lunchroom aide use.

A roster of principals, teachers, and lunchroom aides by school buildings within the cooperating school districts was obtained from the chief school administrators. It was found that 180 school buildings were located within the 45 districts. Of these school buildings, 150 (83.3 percent) were qualified for inclusion in the study based on the use of three or more lunchroom aides working in the building.

As a next step in the study, "packages" of questionnaires were sent to the principals of the qualifying school buildings. A "package" consisted of the following: (1) a questionnaire to be completed by the building principal, (2) a questionnaire to be completed by all lunchroom aides, and (3) questionnaires to be completed by a random selection of teachers comprising 25 percent of the total teacher population within a school building. (A copy of the questionnaire, together with instructions for the principal for distributing, collecting, and returning the entire package, may be obtained from the Bureau of Occupational Education Research, New York State Education Department, Albany, New York 12224.)

The response from school buildings constituted 89.3 percent of the total requested including 89 from suburban central, 33 from rural central and 12 from enlarged city school districts. A total of 1,437 questionnaires was returned by 330 lunchroom aides, 978 teachers, and 129 building principals.

Profile of Lunchroom Aides

Age of Lunchroom Aides

Nearly three-quarters of the lunchroom aides are between 30 and 49 years. Almost one-quarter of these aides are over 49. Very few aides are less than 30 years old.

Table 1: Age of Lunchroom Aides

Age	Frequency	Percent of Total
Under 20	1	.3
20-25	1	.3
26-29	11	3.4
30-39	109	33.5
40-49	128	39.4
Over 49	75	23.1
Total	225	100.0

Selection of Lunchroom Aides by Sex

The majority (55.3 percent) of schools do not select lunchroom aides on the basis of sex. A little less than half of the schools hired only women while three schools hired only men.

Table 2: Selection of Lunchroom Aides by Sex

Sex	Frequency	Percent of Total
Male	3	3.2
Female	46	41.5
Either	66	55.3
Total	115	100.0

Formal Education of Lunchroom Aides

The majority (58.8 percent) of lunchroom aides in the study are high school graduates. Seventeen percent have had some high school experience, and about 11 percent (10.8) have been to college but have not graduated.

Table 3: Formal Education of Lunchroom Aides

Level of Formal Education	Frequency	Percent of Total
8th Grade or Less	12	3.7
Some High School	55	17.0
High School Graduate	190	58.8
Trade School	18	5.6
Some College	35	10.8
Bachelor's Degree	7	2.2
Master's Degree	0	0
Doctor's Degree	0	0
Other	6	1.9
Total	323	100.0

Lunchroom Aide Marital Status

Nine-tenths (90.8 percent) of the lunchroom aides contacted in the study are married. Another 5 percent are widowed. Very few single, divorced, or separated individuals hold lunchroom aide positions.

Table 4: Lunchroom Aide Marital Status

Marital Status	Frequency	Percent of Total
Single	6	1.8
Married	295	90.8
Widowed	17	5.2
Divorced or Separated	7	2.2
Total	325	100.0

The Working Environment of the Lunchroom Aide

Lunchroom Aide Working Arrangements

Almost 90 percent (86.4) of the lunchroom aides are considered as regular workers, but working only part-time. (Table 5) Better than 90 percent (94.4) of the aides are on a daily schedule. (Table 6)

Table 5: Working Arrangements of Lunchroom Aides

Time Required	Frequency	Percent of Total
Full-Time	37	11.4
Part-Time	280	86.4
As Needed	7	2.2
Total	324	100.0

Table 6: Time Schedules of Lunchroom Aides

Time	Frequency	Percent of Total
Daily	301	94.4
Alternate 2 or 3 Days per Week	7	2.2
2 Consecutive Days	0	0
1 Day per Week	11	3.4
Other	0	0
Total	319	100.0

Daily Work Hours

As might be expected, most of the lunchroom aides are busy in school during the noon hour periods. Almost three-quarters (73.8 percent) work between the hours of 10:30 A.M. and 1:30 P.M.

Table 7: Hours Typically Worked by Lunchroom Aides

Hour	Frequency	Percent of Total
Preschool Hours	0	0
Morning Only (e.g. 8 A.M. - 10 A.M.)	3	.9
Morning and Midday (e.g. 8 A.M. - 1:30 P.M.)	26	8.1
Midday Only (10:30 A.M. - 1:30 P.M.)	236	73.8
Afternoon and Midday	36	11.3
Afternoon Only	1	.3
8 Hour Day	18	5.6
Total	320	100.0

Number of Hours Normally Worked Per Week

Three-quarters (75.9 percent) of the lunchroom aides contacted work under 15 hours per week. This approximates 3 hours a day and agrees with the tabulation of just under 75 percent of the aides in school from 10:30 A.M. to 1:30 P.M. (Tables 7 and 8) Only a small fraction are retained for longer lunchroom duty or other work.

Table 8: Number of Hours per Week Worked by Lunchroom Aides

Number of Hours	Frequency	Percent of Total
Under 15	245	75.9
Approximately 20	34	10.5
Approximately 30	11	3.4
Approximately 40	3	.9
Other	30	9.3
Total	323	100.0

Distance Traveled by Lunchroom Aide from Home to School

Over 90 percent (91.7) of the lunchroom aides contacted travel 5 miles or less between home and school. Only three aides (0.9 percent) have homes over 10 miles from school.

Table 9: Travel Distance, Home to School

Mileage: Home to School	Frequency	Percent
0-5	297	91.7
6-10	24	7.4
11-15	3	.9
Total	324	100.0

Lunchroom Aides Hourly and Monthly Wages

The median monthly salary for paid lunchroom aides is about $65.00. Half of the lunchroom aides report a salary of $1.00 to $1.50 per hour. About one-third (33.4 percent) receive hourly wages of $1.50 to $2.00.

Table 10: Lunchroom Aides Hourly Wages

Dollars per Hour	Frequency	Percent of Total
Less than $1.00	16	5.4
$1.00 - $1.50	150	50.7
$1.51 - $2.00	99	33.4
$2.01 - $3.00	28	9.5
More than $3.00	3	1.0
Total Aides	296	100.0

The Lunchroom Aide Reports on How Long it Took Her to Learn Her Job

From the point of view of the lunchroom aide only a short time was needed to become acquainted with the details of the job. Of the lunchroom aides so reporting, 140 (43.6 percent) reported learning the job in a week while 125 (38.9 percent) believed they needed only 1 day.

For those few aides who felt they needed more than a week it is presumed that they may be among the group who have had their positions complicated by other nonlunchroom details or more extensive lunchroom duties.

Table 11: Lunchroom Aide: Time Needed to Learn Her Job

Time	Frequency	Percent of Total
About 1 day	125	38.9
About 1 week	140	43.6
About 1 month	43	13.4
Several months	7	2.2
About 1 year	6	1.9
Several years	0	0
Total	321	100.0

Training Provided Lunchroom Aides after Employment

Individual on-the-job training for lunchroom aides is provided by about three-quarters (76.3 percent) of the schools studied. Group inservice training is arranged by 16 (13.6 percent) of the schools. Special training by outside organizations in conjunction with school authorities is conducted in four of the schools. Many schools use combinations of post employment training.

Table 12: Training Provided for Lunchroom Aides after Employment

Type of Training	Number of Schools Providing	Percent
Individual on-the-Job Training	90	76.3
Group Inservice Training	16	13.6
Special Training	4	3.4
No Special Training Provided	28	26.4

Lunchroom Aide Views of Additional Work and Training

Only a very small fraction (9.2 percent) of lunchroom aides report that they have had additional training. At the same time a large number (84.1 percent) state their belief that additional training is necessary. (Table 13) This view seems at odds with their report (table 11) that only a short time is needed to learn the job. This paradox may perhaps be explained by aide perception of what is and what might be. The aides may view lunchroom details as mundane and casual with something missing; additional training programs might improve understanding and performance.

When lunchroom aides were asked whether they felt qualified to do other school work, four-fifths replied affirmatively. Of this number, 92.4 percent stated they would be willing to do this work. It would appear that most aides feel they are able and would like to take on other duties in addition to lunchroom service. It is noted that 8.2 percent have other jobs outside of school.

Tasks Other Than Lunchroom Aide Duty Performed by the Lunchroom Aide

It is common practice for lunchroom aides to perform additional tasks. Only 42 of the 311 respondent lunchroom aides (13.5 percent) reported lunchroom work as the sole school task. The most frequently reported additional task is audiovisual. Many combinations are evident.

Table 13: Additional Work and Training Perceived by Lunchroom Aides

Question	Yes	%	Unc.*	%	No	%
Have you had additional training?	29	9.2			286	90.8
Do you feel qualified to do more responsible work?	245	80.1			61	19.9
(If yes) would you be willing to do this work?	206	92.4			17	7.6
Have you had previous para-professional experience?	63	20.5			244	79.5
Do you need additional training to do your job?	270	84.1	26	8.1	25	7.8
Do you have another job outside of school?	29	8.2			296	91.8

*Unc. = Uncertain

Table 14: Tasks Other Than Lunchroom Aide Duty Performed by the Lunchroom Aide

Other Tasks	Frequency	Percent of Total
Audiovisual Aide	47	15.1
Playground Aide	2	.6
Teaching Aide	14	4.5
Library Aide	14	4.5
Transportation Aide	9	2.9
Other	183	58.9
Lunchroom Aide Only	42	13.5
Total	311	100.0

Lunchroom Aide Time in Present Position

Nearly all (94.5 percent) of the lunchroom aides have worked less than 1 year at their present positions. None of the aides has worked longer than 3 years. This short job tenure may, perhaps, be explained by the relatively short length of time most school districts have used lunchroom aides.

Table 15: Lunchroom Aide Time in Present Position

Time in Present Position	Frequency	Percent of Total
Less than 1 Year	307	94.5
1-3 Years	18	5.5
More than 3 Years	0	0
Total	325	100.0

Lunchroom Aides Job Plans and Satisfactions

Slightly over half (57.0 percent) of the lunchroom aides intend to stay on their same jobs for the coming year; 21.0 percent expect to be at the same school, but in another position. This retention of about 75 percent seems to indicate considerable continuity in the lunchroom aide programs. These data perhaps indicate some job satisfaction and security.

Table 16 shows lunchroom aide job satisfaction. The evidence from contact with lunchroom aides in the study suggests high satisfaction with the personnel involved, including supervisors; somewhat less satisfaction with the job itself; and considerable dissatisfaction with promotion possibilities and salary. Over 90 percent of the aides are satisfied with the personnel with whom they work and their immediate supervisors. Three-quarters show satisfaction with the type of work required. In the matter of promotion possibilities slightly over half (51.6 percent) are dissatisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or neutral. Pay dissatisfaction, although representing a small fraction (20.7 percent), is large enough to constitute a possible problem needing consideration.

Table 16: Lunchroom Aide Job Satisfaction

Job Conditions	Satisfied		Somewhat Satisfied		Neutral		Somewhat Dissatisfied		Dissatisfied	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
The people with whom you work	294	91.0	19	5.9	6	1.9	4	1.2	0	0
The supervision you receive	287	90.3	21	6.6	8	2.5	2	.6	0	0
The work you do	239	75.2	44	13.8	20	6.3	13	4.1	2	.6
The promotions available	98	38.6	25	9.8	68	26.8	22	8.7	41	16.1
The pay you receive	148	48.5	58	19.0	36	11.8	24	7.9	39	12.8

Social Privileges of Lunchroom Aides

Acceptance of lunchroom aides may in part be measured by the degree to which staff members view social privileges. Five social factor questions were considered by principals, teachers, and lunchroom aides. (Table 17)

Should lunchroom aides use the teachers' lounge? Over two-thirds of the principals felt that aides should have this privilege. The majority (61.9 percent) of teachers agree with the principals. On the other hand there was no real indication of aides as a whole desiring to use the teachers' lounge since about half said "no" and half said "yes"; those aides with negative feelings may perhaps wish to have their own lounge or feel a little estranged from teachers.

Should lunchroom aides attend faculty meetings? A decidedly strong opinion is indicated by all groups against attendance of aides at faculty meetings.

Should lunchroom aides join teachers at coffee breaks? Slightly over half of principals and teachers would like aides to join with teachers for coffee breaks. On the other hand almost three-quarters (73.7 percent) of the aides think otherwise. The question once again raises the possibility of aide sense of exclusion or nonacceptance primarily by teachers.

Should lunchroom aides attend PTA meetings as part of their job? No group, principals, teachers, or aides, believes this to be necessary. The aides are most pronounced against required attendance.

Should lunchroom aides "chit-chat" with teachers? All groups strongly favor informal communications between aides and teachers. No group block in informal conversation seems to be indicated.

Lunchroom Aide Perception of Immediate Supervisors

In 87.9 percent of the cases lunchroom aides consider the building principals as their immediate supervisors. Food supervisors, teachers, and cooks are seldom considered in this light.

Table 17: Group Ratings of Lunchroom Aide Social Privileges in the School

Selected Activity	Percent of Group in Agreement*			
	Principals	Lunchroom Aides	Teachers	Total
Use teachers' lounge	67.2 (80)	50.2 (145)	61.9 (579)	59.8 (804)
Attend faculty meetings	17.4 (21)	6.2 (17)	13.1 (122)	12.1 (160)
Join teachers at coffee breaks	56.4 (66)	26.3 (75)	57.9 (531)	50.9 (672)
Attend PTA meetings	33.6 (40)	24.2 (68)	43.9 (398)	38.7 (506)
Chit-chat with teachers	90.2 (111)	85.6 (268)	87.0 (820)	86.9 (1199)

*Number in parentheses indicates number in group responding favorably.

Table 18: Lunchroom Aide Perception of Immediate Supervisor

Supervisor	Frequency	Percent of Total
Classroom Teacher	12	3.7
Building Principal	282	87.9
Cook	1	.3
Food Supervisor	10	3.1
Other	16	5.0
Total	321	100.0

Participants' Perceptions of Lunchroom Aides Job

Group Ratings of How Well Lunchroom Aide Duties are Defined

The three groups, principals, teachers, and lunchroom aides, were asked to indicate how well they believed the aide duties were defined. Answers to five questions were requested.

Do lunchroom aides know what their job includes? Principals (96.0 percent) and lunchroom aides (97.5 percent) strongly agree that they do. About three-quarters of the teachers agree, while slightly over one-quarter are uncertain.

Do teachers know what the lunchroom aide's job includes? Again the principals and lunchroom aides strongly agree. A majority of teachers believe they understand the aide duties, but a substantial number of teachers (23.4 percent) are uncertain. This fact indicates lapses of information in connection with teacher knowledge of aide duties.

Are lunchroom aides given a written list of duties? Over 60 percent (68.3) of principals and over half (57.0 percent) of the aides state that no written list of job duties are given out. The great majority (81.1 percent) of teachers are uncertain.

Are lunchroom aides told what to do in their jobs? Nearly all of the principals (99.2 percent) and aides (96.2 percent) react positively to this question. Most of the teachers (62.1 percent) also answer affirmatively although slightly over one-third (35.9 percent) are uncertain.

Do lunchroom aides know what their jobs do not include? Nearly 90 percent (89.4) of the aides believe they understand the job limitations. Over one-fifth (20.5 percent) of the principals and 59 percent of the teachers are uncertain. The principals may be asked several questions: "Why is there uncertainty?" "Did the lunchroom aides have proper orientation?" "What means should be used to determine whether the aides were properly oriented?"

Group Rating of Lunchroom Aide Job Preparation

Principals, teachers, and lunchroom aides were asked to respond whether the lunchroom aides in their schools were well, adequately, or poorly prepared for their duties. A very high percentage (81.8) of the aides believed they were well prepared. Principals (69.4 percent) and teachers (65.0 percent) rated the aides as adequately prepared. No aides rated themselves as poorly prepared and only about 15 percent of the principals and teachers felt the aides to have had poor preparation.

Group Rating of Lunchroom Aide Job Performance

Slightly over half of the principals are satisfied with lunchroom aide job performance; a little less than one-third are somewhat satisfied. Teachers are perhaps a little more critical with almost 50 percent satisfied and one-quarter somewhat satisfied. The aides themselves view their efforts much more favorably.

Group Rating of Lunchroom Aide Job Importance

The degree to which importance is credited to the lunchroom aide is worth knowing. Principals, teachers, and the aides were asked to respond in terms of four related questions. (Table 22)

To the question, "Does the lunchroom aide's job help students?" the great majority of respondents in all three groups answered affirmatively. Teachers as a whole were a little less certain than principals and aides.

All groups agree strongly that lunchroom aides are important to the school. About one-quarter (26.9 percent) of the teachers are uncertain.

That teachers appreciate aide work is agreed upon by all groups. Of interest is the fact that the aides have more doubts and uncertainties than other groups. Teachers themselves state that they do appreciate the importance of lunchroom aide work (89.0 percent).

Table 19: Group Ratings of How Well Lunchroom Aide Duties are Defined

Knowledge of Job Definition	Principals Frequency	Principals Percent	Lunchroom Aides Frequency	Lunchroom Aides Percent	Teachers Frequency	Teachers Percent	Total Frequency	Total Percent
Lunchroom aides know what their job includes								
Yes	120	96.0	318	97.5	705	73.5	1144	81.1
Uncertain	5	4.0	8	2.5	244	25.4	257	18.2
No	0	0	0	0	10	1.1	10	.7
Most teachers know what the job includes								
Yes	107	85.6	291	90.7	573	61.9	991	70.6
Uncertain	18	14.4	26	8.1	285	29.7	329	23.4
No	0	0	4	1.2	80	8.4	84	6.0
Lunchroom aides are given a written list of duties								
Yes	35	28.5	128	42.0	58	6.1	221	16.1
Uncertain	4	3.2	3	1.0	763	81.1	770	56.2
No	84	68.3	174	57.0	120	12.8	378	27.7
Lunchroom aides are told what to do in their jobs								
Yes	124	99.2	310	96.2	589	62.1	1023	73.3
Uncertain	1	0.8	6	1.9	341	35.9	348	24.9
No	0	0	6	1.9	19	2.0	25	1.8
Lunchroom aides know what their job does not include								
Yes	94	77.0	280	89.4	353	37.2	727	52.5
Uncertain	25	20.5	19	6.1	560	59.0	604	43.6
No	3	2.5	14	4.5	36	3.8	53	3.9

Table 20: Group Rating of Lunchroom Aide Job Preparation

Level of Preparation	Principals Frequency	Principals Percent	Lunchroom Aides Frequency	Lunchroom Aides Percent	Teachers Frequency	Teachers Percent
Well	19	15.3	266	81.8	184	19.9
Adequate	86	69.4	59	18.2	600	65.0
Poor	19	15.3	0	0	139	15.1
Total	124	100.0	325	100.0	923	100.0

Table 21: Group Rating of Lunchroom Aide Job Performance

Level of Satisfaction	Principals Frequency	Principals Percent	Lunchroom Aides Frequency	Lunchroom Aides Percent	Teachers Frequency	Teachers Percent
Satisfied	72	58.1	210	65.4	477	49.7
Somewhat Satisfied	38	30.6	73	22.7	241	25.1
Neutral	5	4.0	25	7.8	129	13.5
Somewhat Dissatisfied	9	7.3	12	3.8	78	8.1
Dissatisfied	0	0	1	.3	34	3.6
Total	124	100.0	321	100.0	959	100.0

When lunchroom aide importance is related to parental support only principals as a majority agree that this is the case. Both teachers and aides indicate a majority view of uncertainty or disagreement. A sizable number of principals (40.8 percent) are of similar view. It would appear that little effort has actually been made to determine public support and understanding of lunchroom aides and their part in the school program.

Table 22: Group Rating of Lunchroom Aide Job Importance

Area of Importance and Level of Agreement	Principals		Lunchroom Aides		Teachers		Total	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Helps Students								
Agree	98	78.4	268	86.2	578	62.5	964	69.2
Uncertain	21	16.8	43	13.8	281	29.4	345	24.8
Disagree	6	4.8	0	0	78	8.1	84	6.0
No Response	1	--	18	--	21	--	--	--
Important to School								
Agree	104	83.2	294	92.5	684	71.3	1082	77.1
Uncertain	20	16.0	22	6.9	258	26.9	300	21.4
Disagree	1	.8	2	.6	18	1.8	21	1.5
No Response	1	--	11	--	18	--	--	--
Teachers Appreciate Aides' Work								
Agree	117	93.6	269	84.3	859	89.0	1245	88.4
Uncertain	8	6.4	47	14.8	86	8.9	141	10.0
Disagree	0	0	3	.9	20	2.1	23	1.6
No Response	1	--	10	--	13	--	--	--
Parents Support Aides' Work								
Agree	71	56.8	147	46.8	332	34.9	550	39.6
Uncertain	51	40.8	155	49.4	577	60.7	783	56.4
Disagree	3	2.4	12	3.8	41	4.4	56	4.0
No Response	1	--	12	--	28	--	--	--

Lunchroom Aide Employment Procedures and Policies

Minimum Age Requirement for Lunchroom Aides

Most school districts (81.4 percent) do not require a minimum age. Where minimum age is required the range is from 18 to 32 years, with a median of 21.

Table 23: Minimum Age Requirements for Lunchroom Aides

Minimum Age	Frequency	Percent of Total
18	4	3.4
21	16	13.6
22	1	.8
32	1	.8
No Age Designated	96	81.4
Total	118	100.0

Maximum Age Requirements for Lunchroom Aides

Similar to the situation with minimum age, school districts generally do not establish maximum ages for lunchroom aides. In the very few schools where maximum ages are determined, the range varies from 45 to 70 years. (Table 24)

How Lunchroom Aides Reported Means of Obtaining Positions

Of the 308 lunchroom aides responding to this question, 136 (44.2 percent) state that they received their positions through direct contact with school district personnel offices. Second in frequency was information passed on to the lunchroom aides by school employees. Table 25 identifies sources suggested as possibilities and frequency of use.

Table 24: Maximum Age Requirements for Lunchroom Aides

Maximum Age	Frequency	Percent of Total
45	1	.9
60	1	.9
65	4	3.4
70	2	1.7
No Age Designated	109	93.1
Total	117	100.0

School District Educational Standards for Lunchroom Aides

About half (49.2 percent) of the school districts included in the study have no specific educational requirements for lunchroom aides. On the other hand slightly less than this number (44.1 percent) of school districts require a high school diploma as contingent to employment. (Table 26)

Table 25: How Lunchroom Aides Reported Means of Obtaining Positions

Means of Obtaining Position	Frequency	Percent of Total
Through Relative or Friend	24	7.8
Through School Employee	101	32.8
Newspaper Ad	25	8.1
Applied to School Personnel Office	136	44.2
Government Employment Office	0	0
Private Employment Office	0	0
Radio/TV Announcement	0	0
Union Announcement	0	0
Other	22	7.1
Total	308	100.0

Table 26: Educational Standards Required

Standard	Frequency	Percent of Total
Less than High School	7	5.9
High School Diploma	52	44.1
Some College	0	0
College Degree	1	.8
No Special Requirements	58	49.2
Total	118	100.0

Lunchroom Aide Perception of Level of Education Necessary and Sufficient to Satisfactorily Discharge Tasks

Most (53.4 percent) lunchroom aides in the study consider the high school diploma as the minimum educational standard necessary for proper discharge of their duties. Somwhat less (41.3 percent total) feel that either an education through eighth grade or some high school experience is sufficient. Very few (5.3 percent) view higher education in this light. (Table 27)

This perception agrees in part with the district (44.1 percent) educational requirement of at least a high school diploma, but is at odds with 49.2 percent of districts demanding no special requirements. (Table 26)

Table 27: Lunchroom Aide Perception of Needed Educational Requirements

Level of Education	Frequency	Percent of Total
Eighth Grade or Less	46	14.4
Some High School	86	26.9
High School Diploma	171	53.4
Some College	8	2.5
College Degree	0	0
Other	9	2.8
Total	320	100.0

Fringe Benefits Afforded the Lunchroom Aide

It would appear that fringe benefits are not generally afforded lunchroom aides. When these benefits are permitted they are located primarily in sick leave with pay (41.9 percent) and in free meals (31.6 percent).

Table 28: Fringe Benefits for Lunchroom Aides

Fringe Benefit	Afforded	Percent of Total
Free Meals	101	31.6
Health Insurance	23	7.2
Sick Leave With Pay	134	41.9
Retirement (Not Social Security)	32	10.0
Vacation With Pay	18	5.6
Life Insurance	15	4.7
Other	12	3.6

Sources of Funds Supporting Lunchroom Aide Programs

The regular school budget is the source of funds for the support of lunchroom aide programs in 94.9 percent of the school districts. In eight of these districts governmental support supplements, or is used in place of, the school budget.

Table 29: Sources of Funds for Lunchroom Aide Program

Source	Frequency	Percent of Total*
Regular School Budget	112	94.9
Governmental Support	8	6.8
Foundation Support	0	0
Private Resources	0	0
Other	5	4.2
Total	125	---

*Percent total exceeds 100.0 since some school districts use combinations of fund sources.

Group Rating of Advisability of State Certification Requirements for Lunchroom Aides

Teachers and lunchroom aides were asked to consider whether State certification requirements should be applied to the lunchroom aide position. Over three-quarters (76.7 percent) of the teachers and slightly over 60 percent (61.8) of the aides felt this was not necessary. (Table 30)

Table 30: Group Rating of State Certification Advisability for Lunchroom Aides

Certification Needed?	Teachers		Lunchroom Aides		Total	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Yes	215	23.3	115	38.2	330	27.0
No	707	76.7	186	61.8	893	73.0

Lunchroom Aides Perceived and Preferred Roles

Contrast of Lunchroom Aide Expected and Actual Role

Nearly all lunchroom aides are doing what they expected as their role. Job descriptions and/or expectancies appear to be accurate with actual situations. The few cases of discrepancy are probably due to (1) insufficient information by school officials, (2) additional duties appended without prior information, or (3) overselling and/or misinformation.

Table 31: Expected and Actual Roles

Job is as expected	Frequency	Percent of Total
Yes	308	96.0
No	13	4.0
Total	321	100.0

Group Ratings of Actual and Ideal Lunchroom Aide Job Activities

The study attempted to discover the perception of principals, teachers, and lunchroom aides in regard to actual as contrasted to ideal job activities associated with the work of the lunchroom aide. The actual job activity roles as considered by each group are shown in table 32.

Table 32: Actual Role, Group Rating of Activities Perceived as Components of Lunchroom Aide Job

Lunchroom Aide Activity	Principal Percent Yes	Lunchroom Aide Percent Yes	Teacher Percent Yes
Keep Attendance Records	3.2	3.7	3.9
Sell Food	12.1	13.1	18.1
Sell Lunch Tickets	2.4	2.1	8.7
Punch Meal Tickets	1.7	.4	7.2
Make Up Menus	.8	0	4.7
Take Lunch Counts	4.1	9.9	11.6
Keep Lunch Records	5.6	8.8	13.3
Inventory Supplies	4.8	5.5	8.1
Issue Passes	20.3	16.0	24.7
Answer Telephone	8.1	7.3	16.8
Answer Intercom	24.6	11.2	27.9
Complete Accident Reports	46.3	16.1	30.9
Compile Absentee Lists	3.3	1.8	3.1
Bring Students From Class to Lunch	11.5	16.3	8.9
Keep Order in Lunchroom	100.0	96.5	94.8
Take Students From Lunch to Class	18.9	25.2	12.9

Table 32: (Cont.)

Lunchroom Aide Activity	Principal Percent Yes	Lunchroom Aide Percent Yes	Teacher Percent Yes
Take Care of Ventilation and Lights	80.5	51.2	67.0
Take Food to Classrooms	1.6	6.1	3.3
Take Food to Other Buildings	0	0	1.6
Clean up Lunchroom	40.3	39.9	43.6
Clean Kitchen	4.0	1.3	9.0
Collect Dirty Dishes	9.7	13.6	14.7
Wash Dishes	2.4	1.3	8.5
Serve Food on Line	8.1	4.3	11.3
Prepare Food for Cooking	.8	0	7.6
Cook Food	.8	0	7.3
Set Tables	20.2	8.6	13.1
Clean Tables	60.2	64.4	50.7
Play Records: Music Appreciation	19.5	11.9	10.7

Review of table 32 indicates that there is agreement among the groups that actual job activities for most lunchroom aides heavily involve the following jobs (in order of greatest frequency): keep order in the lunchroom, take care of ventilation and lights, clean tables, clean up lunchroom, complete accident reports, and collect dirty dishes. Other job activities are much less frequent in appearance.

All three groups generally agree with the existence of job activities. Such differences in views apply only to small percentages of teachers, principals, and lunchroom aides and do not reflect the groups in general.

Small percentages of teachers credit lunchroom aides as actually performing certain job activities which the principals and lunchroom aides do not admit. These are: sell lunchroom tickets, punch meal tickets, make up menus, keep lunch records, wash dishes, prepare food for cooking, cook food, answer telephone, and clean kitchen. The probable reason for the differences in views by these small numbers of teachers lies in the teachers' lack of real knowledge of lunchroom aide performance with the result that their opinions as reported in the study were based on hearsay or guess work in terms of what they thought the aides probably were doing.

By and large principals and lunchroom aides agree concerning lunchroom aide jobs. The few differences involve small percentages of both groups.

On the basis of mean scores the composite opinions of all three groups are to be seen in table 33.

Table 33: Rank Position of Mean Scores Group Ratings of Actual Activities Perceived as Components of Lunchroom Aide Job

Job Activity	Rating	Job Activity	Rating
Keep order in lunchroom	1.01*	Take lunch counts	1.90
Take care of ventilation and lights	1.35	Serve food on line	1.90
Clean tables	1.46	Inventory Supplies	1.93
Clean up lunchroom	1.57	Clean kitchen	1.93
Complete accident reports	1.70	Sell lunch tickets	1.93
Collect dirty dishes	1.70	Wash dishes	1.94
Answer intercom	1.76	Prepare food for cooking	1.94
Issue passes	1.77	Cook food	1.94
Sell food	1.83	Punch meal tickets	1.95
Take students from lunch to class	1.84	Keep attendance records	1.96
Answer telephone	1.86	Take food to classrooms	1.96
Set tables	1.87	Compile absentee lists	1.97
Keep lunch records	1.88	Make up menus	1.97
Play records	1.88	Take food to other buildings	1.99
Bring students from class to lunch	1.89		

*Duty most common in practice

Principals, teachers, and lunchroom aides were asked to express their opinions concerning the job activities of lunchroom aides which should constitute their ideal roles. These ideal job activities are shown in table 34.

Table 34: Ideal Role, Group Ratings of Activities Perceived as Components of Lunchroom Aide Job

Lunchroom Aide Activity	Principal Yes	Principal Percent Yes	Lunchroom Aide Yes	Lunchroom Aide Percent Yes	Teacher Yes	Teacher Percent Yes
Keep Attendance Records	8	14.8	18	11.8	130	14.9
Sell Food	15	13.8	16	10.6	220	23.5
Sell Lunch Tickets	24	21.8	15	10.2	285	33.1
Punch Meal Tickets	22	20.2	7	4.8	258	30.5
Make up Menus	6	5.4	7	4.8	75	8.7
Take Lunch Count	33	29.5	16	10.7	350	40.4
Keep Lunch Records	29	25.7	19	12.8	318	36.8
Inventory Supplies	17	15.0	14	9.5	159	18.6
Issue Passes	35	31.2	44	28.0	354	41.3
Answer Telephone	20	18.2	17	11.7	269	31.7
Answer Intercom	36	33.3	28	13.3	396	46.3
Complete Accident Reports	55	50.5	31	21.5	456	52.5
Compile Absentee Reports	11	9.9	13	9.2	136	15.9
Bring Students from Class to Lunch	41	36.6	30	20.7	366	41.5

Table 34: (Cont.)

Lunchroom Aide Activity	Principal Yes	Principal Percent Yes	Lunchroom Aide Yes	Lunchroom Aide Percent Yes	Teacher Yes	Teacher Percent Yes
Keep Order in Lunchroom	109	98.2	115	58.3	882	97.8
Take Students from Lunch to Class	41	36.9	43	29.1	406	46.0
Take Care of Ventilation and Lights	90	81.8	79	51.6	681	77.1
Take Food to Classrooms	8	7.5	8	5.8	94	10.9
Take Food to Other Buildings	5	4.7	0	0	56	6.5
Clean up Lunch-room	53	48.6	38	26.2	417	47.4
Clean Kitchen	5	4.6	4	2.9	100	11.5
Collect Dirty Dishes	16	14.7	12	8.6	158	18.2
Wash Dishes	5	4.6	3	2.2	93	10.7
Serve Food on Line	12	11.0	10	7.1	151	17.3
Prepare Food for Cooking	3	2.8	2	1.4	73	8.4
Cook Food	1	.9	2	1.4	68	7.9
Set Tables	33	30.6	15	10.6	203	23.6
Clean Tables	69	6[illegible]9	64	43.0	479	54.7
Play Records	56	52.3	50	33.1	486	55.8

Table 34 indicates a strong agreement among all groups that lunchroom aides should be involved in the following job activities (in order of frequency): keep order in lunchroom and take care of ventilation and lights.

Disagreements between views of lunchroom aides with principals and teachers are more numerous. Principals and teachers are more inclined to feel that the aides should be involved in the following job activities: playing records, cleaning tables, taking lunchroom counts, keeping lunch records, issuing passes, answering telephones and intercoms, completing accident reports, bringing students from class to lunch and return, and cleaning up lunchroom. With these items lunchroom aides show much less support.

On the basis of mean scores the composite opinions of all groups in regard to the ideal job composites are shown in table 35.

Comparative Rank of Actual and Ideal Roles of Lunchroom Aides: Composite Groups

A comparison of the combined group ratings for actual and ideal lunchroom aide job activity is given in table 36.

A correlation[1] of .852 between actual and ideal rank scores indicates a strong relationship. This high relationship indicates that the composite views of principals, teachers, and lunchroom aides tend to be quite similar in terms of actual and ideal lunchroom aide job activity importance.

Collective group opinion supports almost uniformly both actual and ideal lunchroom job activity as most important (in order of frequency): keep order in lunchroom, take care of ventilation and lights, clean tables, clean up lunchrooms, and complete accident reports.

On the other hand the same collective group opinion places the following job activities as least important (in order of frequency): take food to other buildings, make up menus, compile absentee lists, take food to classrooms, and keep attendance records.

In contrasting actual as against ideal rankings only "collecting dirty dishes" seems to be very much out of order. Actual practice places this activity in the "frequently done" category, while ideally the composite group places it at about the middle of desired activities. "Selling food" also seems to be done more than ideally desired; as eighth in actual rank, it is 17th in ideal rank. The matter of "punching meal tickets" has more support in practice than in theory.

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[1] On basis of Spearman Rho

Table 35: Rank Positions of Mean Scores Group Ratings of Ideal Activities Perceived as Components of Lunchroom Aide Job

Job Activity	Rating	Job Activity	Rating
Keep order in lunchroom	1.11*	Set tables	1.77
Take care of ventilation and lights	1.25	Sell food	1.78
Clean tables	1.46	Inventory supplies	1.83
Play records	1.48	Collect dirty dishes	1.83
Complete accident reports	1.52	Serve food on line	1.85
Clean up lunchroom	1.55	Keep attendance records	1.86
Take students from lunch to class	1.57	Compile absentee lists	1.86
Answer intercom	1.58	Take food to classrooms	1.90
Issue passes	1.62	Clean kitchen	1.90
Bring students from class to lunch	1.62	Wash dishes	1.91
Take lunch counts	1.65	Make up menus	1.92
Keep lunch records	1.67	Prepare food for cooking	1.93
Sell lunch tickets	1.71	Take food to other buildings	1.94
Answer telephone	1.72	Cook food	1.94
Punch meal tickets	1.74		

*Duty most commonly thought as ideal

Table 36: Composite Group Comparative Ranking of Actual and Ideal Job Activities as Based on Unweighted Means

Job Activity	Actual Rank	Ideal Rank	Job Activity	Actual Rank	Ideal Rank
Keep order in lunchroom	1	1	Take lunch counts	16½	11
Take care of ventilation and lights	2	2	Serve food on line	16½	20
Clean tables	3	3	Inventory supplies	19	18½
Clean up lunchroom	4	6	Clean kitchen	19	23½
Complete accident reports	5½	5	Sell lunch tickets	19	13
Collect dirty dishes	5½	18½	Wash dishes	22	25
Answer intercom	7	8	Prepare food for cooking	22	27
Issue passes	8	9½	Cook food	22	28½
Sell food	9	17	Punch meal tickets	24	15
Take students from lunch to class	10	7	Keep attendance records	25½	21½
Answer telephone	11	14	Take food to classroom	25½	23½
Set tables	12	16	Compile absentee lists	27½	21½
Keep lunch records	13½	12	Make up menus	27½	26
Play records	13½	4	Take food to other buildings	29	28½
Bring students from class to lunch	15	9½			

Comparative Rank of Actual and Ideal Roles of Lunchroom Aides: Individual Groups

It is of interest to compare principal, teacher, and lunchroom aide ratings of actual with ideal job activities. Table 37 shows this comparison based on weighted means.

The correlation of principals' actual with ideal rankings of lunchroom aide job activities is .866. Teachers' rank correlation of these activities is .797 and the lunchroom aides correlation is .902. All of these correlations are quite high and tend to show that each group places actual and ideal job activities in similar ranking.

Lunchroom aides generally view actual jobs as very close to the ideal. This lack of difference may be due to satisfaction on the job and/or lack of experience and training leading to limited knowledge concerning job possibilities and importance. On the other hand teachers as a group believe the lunchroom aide's actual versus ideal situation to be less perfect, although not greatly out of line.

Table 37: An Analysis of the Differences Between Group Ratings of Actual and Ideal Lunchroom Aide Roles

Lunchroom Activity	Principal		Lunchroom Aide		Teacher	
	Actual	Ideal	Actual	Ideal	Actual	Ideal
Keep order in lunchroom	1	1	1	1	1	1
Take care of ventilation and lights	2	2	3	2	2	2
Clean tables	3	3	2	3	3	4
Complete accident reports	4	5	7	8	5	5
Clean up lunchroom	5	6	4	7	4	6
Answer intercom	6	9	12	10	6	7
Issue passes	7	10	8	6	7	10
Set tables	8	11	15	15½	12	16
Play records	9	4	11	4	16	3
Take students from lunchroom to class	10	7	5	5	13	8
Sell food	11	20	10	15½	8	17
Bring students from class to lunchroom	12	8	6	9	18	9
Collect dirty dishes	13	19	9	20	10	19
Answer telephone	14½	16	16	13	9	14
Serve food on line	14½	21	19	21	15	20

Table 37: (Cont.)

Lunchroom Activity	Principal		Lunchroom Aide		Teacher	
	Actual	Ideal	Actual	Ideal	Actual	Ideal
Keep lunch money records	16	13	14	11	11	12
Inventory supplies	17	17	18	18	20	18
Take lunch count	18	12	13	14	14	11
Clean kitchen	19	26½	23½	25	17	23
Complete absentee lists	20	22	22	19	28	21
Keep attendance records	21	18	20	12	26	22
Sell lunch tickets	22½	14	21	17	19	13
Wash dishes	22½	26½	23½	26	21	25
Punch meal tickets	24	15	25	23½	24	15
Take food to classroom	25	23	17	22	27	24
Make up menus	27	24	27½	23½	25	26
Prepare food for cooking	27	28	27½	27½	22	27
Cook food	27	29	27½	27½	23	28
Take food to other buildings	29	25	27½	29	29	29

Conclusions

Demography of Lunchroom Aides

1. Three-quarters of the aides range in age from 30 to 49 years. Only 4 percent are under 30. Those of 50 and over constitute about one-fifth (23.1 percent) of the aides.

2. The majority (58.8 percent) of lunchroom aides are high school graduates. Seventeen percent have had some high school study. About one-tenth (10.8 percent) have had some college experience. Only 3.7 percent of the aides have had an eighth grade education or less.

3. Over 90 percent of the lunchroom aides are married and the same percent of aides work in school on a daily basis.

Working Environment of Lunchroom Aides

1. Lunchroom aides tend to live within a short distance from the school building where they work.

2. Almost three-quarters of the lunchroom aides work between the hours of 10:30 A.M. to 1:30 P.M. A small fraction of the aides (5.6 percent) work an 8-hour day.

3. Slightly over half of the lunchroom aides earn between $1.00 to $1.50 per hour. One-third of the aides earn between $1.51 and $2.00 per hour. The median monthly salary for all lunchroom aides is about $65.00.

4. Almost half (43.6 percent) of the lunchroom aides believe they need a maximum of 1 week to learn the job while 38.9 percent feel only 1 day was needed. On the other hand, 84.1 percent of the aides would like further training although the nature of their needs is not described.

5. Over three-quarters of the lunchroom aides received on-the-job training. Group training and/or special training in conjunction with other institutions is at a minimum.

6. Over four-fifths of the lunchroom aides wish to be engaged in school work in addition to their present duties. Only 13.5 percent of the aides reported lunchroom services as their sole school work. Audiovisual assistance was most often reported as extra work.

7. In general (94.5 percent) lunchroom aides have held their positions for less than a year.

8. Better than half of the lunchroom aides plan to remain at their jobs for the coming year. About one-fifth of the aides anticipate a different position in the school system. Retention of about 75 percent seems certain.

9. Most aides are satisfied with the personnel involved in lunchroom work, but appear less satisfied with the job primarily because of promotion blocks and lack of salary increases.

10. Principals and teachers generally agree that lunchroom aides should have the privilege of using the teachers' lounges; in contrast proportionally fewer aides indicate an interest in this privilege.

11. Principals, teachers, and lunchroom aides strongly agree that lunchroom aides should not attend faculty and P.T.A. meetings.

12. Principals and teachers are about evenly divided over the question of inviting lunchroom aides to teacher coffee breaks while 26.3 percent of the aides want to join the teachers at this function. All three groups strongly support enhancement of informal contacts between lunchroom aides and teachers.

13. Almost 90 percent of the lunchroom aides consider the building principal as their immediate supervisor.

Perception of Lunchroom Aides and their Jobs

1. The majority of principals believe lunchroom aides fully understand their job criteria; teachers are less certain. Most teachers believe their own knowledge of lunchroom aide work details to be sufficient to make judgments; on the other hand, one-quarter of the teachers admit to meager knowledge. Nearly all (96.0 percent) of the lunchroom aides state that they are doing what they expected to do when they accepted their positions.

2. Less than half of the lunchroom aides are given written descriptions of their jobs. Teachers show very little knowledge of the means through which the aides are oriented.

3. Almost 90 percent of the lunchroom aides believe that they understand the job limitations. About one-fifth of the principals and just over half of the teachers have reservations concerning this knowledge.

4. Lunchroom aides (81.8 percent) believe they are well prepared to carry out their duties. Principals (69.4 percent) and teachers (65.0 percent) rated lunchroom aides as only adequately prepared. A small percentage of principals (15.3 percent) and teachers (15.1 percent) rated the aides as poorly prepared.

5. Teachers as a group are more critical of lunchroom aide performance than are principals, and principals are more critical concerning such performance than are the aides. Only 49.7 percent of the teachers indicate full satisfaction with the work of lunchroom aides.

6. Principals, teachers, and lunchroom aides generally support the importance of the lunchroom aide program for students, although teachers tend to be a little less certain.

7. Principals as a whole view the position of the lunchroom aide as important to parental support. However, teachers and lunchroom aides are generally in doubt about this importance.

Lunchroom Aide Employment Procedures and Policies

1. Most school districts do not have regulations concerning minimum and maximum ages for lunchroom aide service. Where regulations do exist, minimum requirements range from 18 to 32 years with a median age of 21, and maximum requirements range from 45 to 70 with a median age of 65.

2. The great majority of lunchroom aides reported that they learned of the existence of their positions through school personnel offices (44.2 percent) and through other school employees (32.8 percent).

3. In the hiring of lunchroom aides school districts operate with and without consideration of educational requirements. The high school diploma is the standard for 44.1 percent of the schools reporting in the study, while 49.1 percent of the schools have no special educational requirements.

4. Over 50 percent (53.4) of the lunchroom aides believe a high school diploma is the necessary educational standard for lunchroom aide employment.

5. Fringe benefits are not generally afforded lunchroom aides. When they are afforded they are usually limited to sick leave with pay (41.9 percent) and free meals (31.6 percent).

6. The regular school budget is the source of support for nearly all reported lunchroom aide programs. Governmental support (6.8 percent) is limited and appears to be a supplement to the regular school budget.

7. Teachers and lunchroom aides generally do not favor State certification for lunchroom aides.

8. Principals, teachers, and lunchroom aides believe the actual job of the lunchroom aide includes (as most frequently reported and in order): keep order in lunchroom, take care of ventilation and lights, clean tables, complete accident reports, and collect dirty dishes.

9. All three groups agree that the ideal role of the lunchroom aide should include keeping order in lunchroom, and taking care of ventilation and lights. Principals and teachers also agree, but with less support from lunchroom aides, that the lunchroom aide should also be involved with playing records, cleaning tables, taking lunchroom counts, keeping lunch records, issuing passes, answering telephones and intercoms, completing accident reports, bringing students to and from classes, and cleaning up the lunchrooms.

10. Correlations of lunchroom aide roles indicate high agreement of each group in respect to actual and ideal roles, and between groups in these respects.